



## **Boating Clean Practices**

Department of Boating and Waterways  
[www.BoatResponsibly.com](http://www.BoatResponsibly.com)

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### **1. Prevent oily discharge from the bilge.**

Keep your boat engine well-tuned to prevent fuel and oil leaks. Place an oil absorbent under the engine and in the bilge. Check the absorbents often and dispose of them as hazardous waste at a marina or nearby collection center. Keep your bilge clean and dry.

### **2. Spill-proof your oil changes and your fueling practices**

If you change your boat's engine oil, be sure to use a closed system (such as a portable oil-change pump) available at marine supplies stores and always have handy an oil absorbent. Drain the used oil into a container that can be closed to prevent spills during transfer of oil. Recycle your used oil and oil filters. Fuel up your tank slowly and carefully and by using absorbents to catch drips and spills. Do not top-off or overflow your fuel tank, and leave 10% of your tank empty to allow fuel to expand as it warms. Dispose of saturated absorbents and fuel bibs at a hazardous household waste facility.

### **3. Do not add soap.**

Never use soap to disperse fuel and oil spills. It increases harm to the environment, and it is illegal. Avoid using bilge cleaners as they may get discharged overboard.

### **4. Minimize boat cleaning and maintenance in the water.**

Save maintenance projects for the boatyard. Avoid the docks and over the water projects. When performing work on the water, minimize your impact by containing waste using tarps and vacuum sanders, and collect all drips and debris for proper disposal. Use cleaners that are water-based, biodegradable, phosphate-free and labeled as less toxic. Avoid products with ingredients known to cause cancer or reproductive harm as listed in California's Proposition 65.

### **5. Reduce toxic discharges from bottom paints.**

Consider using non-copper antifouling coatings. Minimize fouling growth and extend the life of your hull coating by giving the bottom a thorough wipe with a soft, non-abrasive sponge. Use environmentally-friendly hull cleaning companies, who use green management practices such as monitoring their divers, and using non-abrasive scrubbing agents. Remember, if your boat isn't used frequently, consider keeping it in dry storage or installing a hoist that floats in the slip to minimize fouling marine growth.

### **6. Dispose of hazardous waste properly.**

Dispose of paints, batteries, antifreeze, cleaning products, oil, oil filters and other hazardous wastes at a hazardous waste collection facility or event.

### **7. Plan A-head! Manage sewage wastes properly.**

Never discharge untreated sewage anywhere within the three-mile territorial limit or into shallow waters, and never discharge treated sewage into shallow waters, bays, harbors or marinas. Use sewage pumpouts, dump stations or mobile-pumpout services.

### **8. Stow it, do not throw it!**

Keep your trash on board. Never throw cigarette butts, fishing line or any other garbage into our waterways. Take advantage of shore-side facilities to recycle plastic, glass, metal, and paper and avoid excess packaging.

### **9. Reduce grey water discharges**

Use a phosphate-free soap to minimize the impacts of grey water on the marine environment. Also, minimize discharge by doing dishes and showers on shore whenever possible.

### **10. Do not spread aquatic invasive species. Clean, Drain and Dry Your Boat.**

Before leaving any body of water, examine your boat and equipment and remove any visible mud, plants or animals before transporting equipment. Never release plants or animals into a body of water unless they came out of that body of water. Also, do not release them into storm drains, because most storm drains lead to water bodies or wetlands. Eliminate water from all equipment before transporting anywhere. Clean and dry anything that came in contact with the water (boats, trailers, equipment, dogs, boots, clothing, etc.).

**For hazardous waste recycling or collection centers call  
1-800-CLEAN-UP or visit [www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org).**